

Urgent Cheating Lead to Soviets on SALT

By Ted Apos
Associated Press

The United States has uncovered evidence of substantial new Soviet violations of the SALT II agreement, including the potential to double the throw-weight of its missile force through technological innovation. It was learned yesterday from U.S. military and joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. sources.

The sources also said that there are indications that Soviet officials at the Geneva SALT talks on limiting strategic nuclear missiles will refuse to set a date to return to the negotiating table after the present cycle has ended for the holidays. The talks are due to wind up today.

SOVIETS

From page one

U.S. intelligence analysts previously had suspected these violations, but the revelation came as something of a surprise, the sources said. "They came right out and admitted it on their own," said one source. "It appeared to be an act of contempt or defiance of U.S. concern," he added.

* The satellite upgrading by August of two specimens of Soviet Backfire bombers at long range strike bases in Arctic staging bases. This indicates the projected use of the Backfires as intercontinental bombers.

* The discovery that the Soviets are producing 10 to 40 Backfire bombers each year, when former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev wrote in his agreement that no more than 30 per year would be produced.

* The detection since June 1983 of first tests of a new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) with a throw-weight in violation of SALT II accords.

This new SLBM, designated by U.S. intelligence as SSN-X-21, is estimated to have a greater throw-weight than that of the SS-19 intercontinental ballistic missile.

In effect, the sources said, this would amount to a Soviet without the Soviets but would still talk with the United States on intermediate-range missiles after the West German Parliament agreed to deploy U.S. cruise and Pershing II missiles as part of NATO's nuclearization program.

The SALT II treaty was agreed upon in June 1979 but has not been ratified. However, President Reagan publicly committed the United States to abiding by its terms as long as the Soviet Union does so.

The sources said there have been five major developments in the ongoing debate over Soviet compliance with the strategic arms limitation treaty. These include:

* The unprecedented, and pre-

dicted, upgrading of Soviet Backfire bombers at long range strike bases in Arctic staging bases. This is a violation of Article 9 of the SALT II agreement.

The sources also said that the Soviets apparently have mastered the technology through the use of improved propellants and the design of a fourth-stage "post-booster" vehicle" which would normally contain the missile's warhead and guidance electronics, but instead, the payload and guidance are installed in the third stage, allowing the increase in throw-weight.

If this upgrading were to be applied to all Soviet land and naval-based missiles, the sources said, it would effectively double the throw-weight capability of the entire Soviet missile force.

* The strong indications that senior U.S. officials are becoming increasingly willing to accuse the Soviets of SALT II violations. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in top-level interagency meetings, heretofore have repeatedly urged the United States to continue applying with terms of the unratified SALT II accord, even though Soviet violations in at least 10 areas are known.

This view as expressed by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Furt and other officials, has been that as long as the Soviets are complying with more SALT II terms than they are violating, the United

States should not demand ratification by the Senate of the SALT II agreement.

On Nov. 23, Soviet general, major in Geneva as the SALT Standing Consultative Committee, admitted for the first time that they already had deployed more missile launchers capable of carrying multiple warheads than the SALT II calling allowed. The agreement allows for deployment of no more than 1,200 such "MIRVed" launchers.

The general also admitted that they had deployed more heavy bombers equipped with long-range cruise missiles than the 1,300 SALT II agreement provided.

see SOVIETS, page 124

States should continue complying with all the terms of the agreement.

One, the sources said, those bases became "minuteman" in the top-level interagency panels and the decision to openly accuse the Soviets of violations of SALT II is increasing. President Reagan is known to have in hand a full list of Soviet SALT II violations, which he has been reluctant to make public.

On the issue of the Backfire bombers, the sources reported that since 1977 the Soviets have operated Backfire bombers from Arctic bases at Olenyovka, on the Kolyma Peninsula near Murmansk, a location ideally suited for potential Soviet operations against Europe. These Backfires were naval-oriented, intended for strikes against NATO naval formations, so they were not believed to be a SALT II violation.

But with the recent evidence from U.S. reconnaissance satellites of Backfires at long-range staging bases closer to the Arctic, their use as intercontinental bombers, with a capability of quickly striking all of the United States, was confirmed.

The sources said it was virtually certain that the Reagan administration would demand full disclosure of the Soviets' SALT II violations. While no date was mentioned, it is expected to occur around the time Congress reconvenes in January.